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Y A N K E E
B A L L A D S

Y A N K E E B A L L A D S

BY

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A
TRANSACTION
IN
STOCKS

(1639)

ERE BOSTON was a decade old
The sinners had to be controlled,
For sometimes erring feet would stray
From virtue's puritanic way.

Better than prison bars and locks
A pair of good old *English* stocks!
Through them before the eyes of all
Should sin look large, the sinner small!

TO EDWARD PALMER then was set
The grateful task his tools to whet
And rear a structure fair and strong,
A sure arrest for steps of wrong.

He felled a tree — I make no doubt —
He sawed and hewed and planed it out,
Then made — a clever craftsman still —
One pound, thirteen, and seven his bill.

“Extortion!” ruled the General Court,
Unused to charges of the sort,
And pondered what were best to do
To hold the scales of justice true.

Five pounds they fined him — though ’tis writ
They took at last a tenth of it —
And ruled that his own feet be caught
Within the stocks his hands had wrought

So must this babe in public crime,
Born centuries before his time;
Be humbled in the market-place,—
And there he bore an hour’s disgrace.

Now be it once for all confessed
The early Puritans possessed,
Despite a long-surviving rumor,
A certain groping sense of humor.





BEN FRANKLIN'S
HEAD

(1728)

TO COTTON MATHER once there came
A *Boston* boy on wisdom bent.

If all the world knew not his name,
BEN FRANKLIN yet could wait content.

They talked, and when their talk was done —
In MATHER'S study talk was brief —

Young BEN arose to go as one
Who felt — as who would not ? — relief.

To quit the theologian's lair,
The priestly Puritan's retreat,
Through a dark passage he must fare
With halting, unfamiliar feet.

Behind him MATHER, careful host,
 His groping exit sought to guide,
 And where a danger threatened most,
 "Stoop! stoop!" in friendly warning cried.

Poor BEN, he heard, or heeded, not;
 A plague upon a beam low-spread!
 So sharp a whack his forehead got
 The wisdom joggled in his head.

But MATHER, ever prone to preach,
 Drew straight an ethic parallel:
 "Let this, my friend, its lesson teach,
 'Twill serve you, in remembrance, well.

"The world still lies before you, BEN;
 Stoop as you tread its devious ways;
 And many thumps from many men
 You'll miss through all the coming days."

BEN FRANKLIN, through his length of years,
 Held that chance counsel still supreme,
 And stooping oft among his peers,
 Triumphant passed 'neath many a beam.



So blending practice and belief

 The sage still watched the world roll by,
And marked how many came to grief
 Because they held their heads too high.



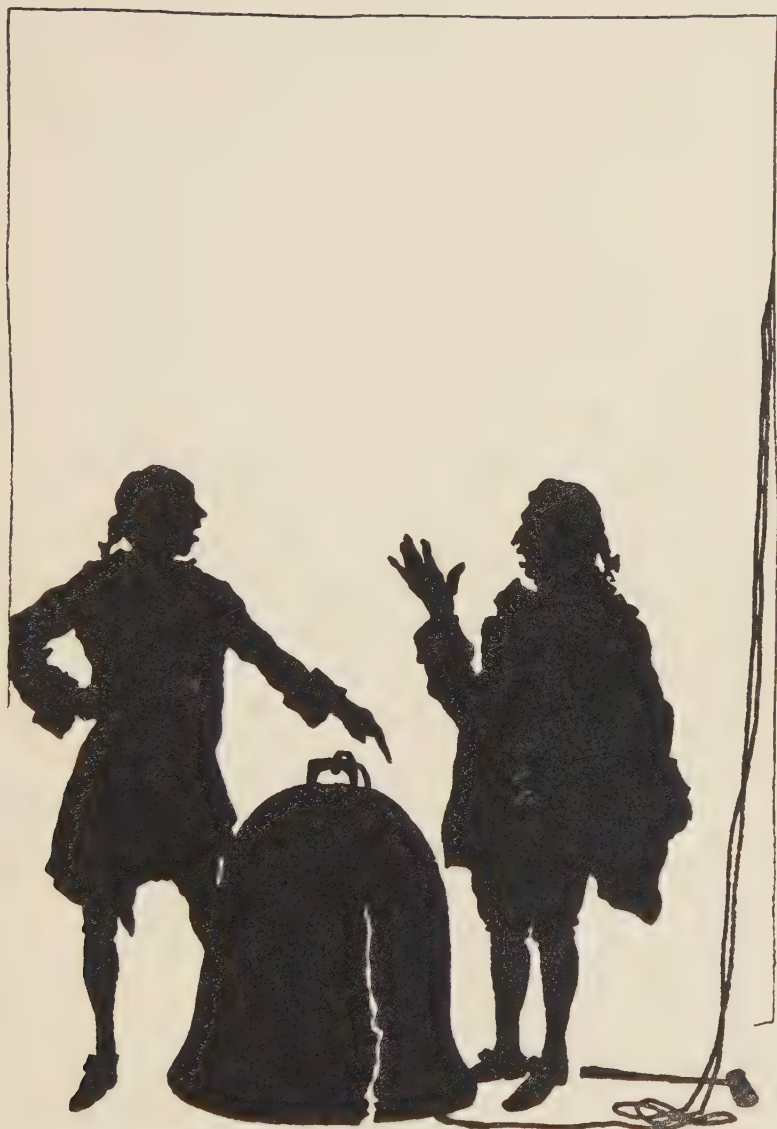
THE BRISTOL BELL

(1728)

WHEN GEORGE the SECOND in *Albion's Isle*
Defended the faith, 'twas a weary while
Till a ship that sailed from *Rhode Island's* shore
Could drop its anchor at home once more.

And the churchmen of *Bristol*, who'd hoarded well
And sent overseas for an *English* bell,
Had waited full many a month and long
For the cheer of their new-built steeple's song.

But at last the vessel at *Newport* lay,
And a brave little sloop sailed down the bay
To ferry the bell to *Bristol* town
That should bless Saint MICHAEL's with wide
renown.



Though the brave sloop's men numbered only two,
 Their pride was enough for a galleon's crew,
 And it puffed them large with the part they'd
 play—

For when pride is at work, it works that way.

"The deck is too lowly a place," they said,
 "For our glorious cargo; high overhead
 We'll hang it, and fling to the winds its peal
 To speak for the righteous joy we feel."

So up to the cross-trees the bell they swung,
 Forgetting by mere mischance its tongue;
 "What matter!" cried brawny WALDRON, "I
 Will smite it myself 'neath the arching sky!"

Then aloft he climbed with a mighty sledge
 To waken a note from the slumbering edge
 Of the church's treasure, all silent till
 The mounting WALDRON should prove his skill.

"Give ear, good helmsman!" he cried aloud,
 As he reached the top of the slender shroud,
 And praise to himself for his prowess spoke,
 And curved his arm for a giant stroke.

D-o-n-g! Glorious tone! How its echoes ran
Round and across the horizon's span!
Did ever a sound so full and clear
Ring in a proud *Bristolian's* ear!

"Again!" cried the steersman in mad delight,
"Still a lustier note from the metal smite!"
And the answer came, "What you hear below
Bristol shall hear this time, I trow!"

Oh, the ponderous blow that descended then —
'Twas past all telling of tongue or pen!
For alack and alas! by ill fortune's whim
It cracked the church-bell from top to rim!

Then woe for the pitiful homeward sail,
And the crestfallen heroes glum and pale,
With an eager crowd on the wharf to be met
With naught but a prayer to forgive and forget!

In briefest measure their tale they told,
But they learned a lesson that's never grown old:
When pride, on land, sea, river, or bay,
Is at work, it can work in a direful way.



THE BALLAD OF THE

BETHELL

(1748)

HOMEWARD bound was the *Bethell*, out from the
 Midland Sea
 Past the Strait of *Gibraltar* into the west sailed she.
 ISAAC FREEMAN, the master, thought of his cargo
 sold,
 Thought of the wares of *Europe* laden safe in the
 hold,
 Prayed for a peaceful passage, yet—if fight he must—
 Letters of marque he carried, and a score of guns
 outthrust
 Their menace to *French* and *Spaniards*, who never
 would need to know
 That six of the guns were wooden,—for the *Bethell*
 still should go

Safe overseas to *Boston*, with riches brought from far
To owners that dared the uttermost, despite King
GEORGE'S War.

The sun swung low to the westward, lost were the
hills of *Spain*,
When far through the golden sun-track a sail rose
out of the main.
Slowly it grew to a vessel, blocking the *Bethell's* path,
Like a beast of prey that waited for the glutting of
its wrath;
And through the waning daylight a sea-schooled eye
could tell
'Twas the flag of *Spain* that lifted and sank on the
long ground-swell.
So great a foe for the *Bethell*, so small and all unfit!
Never such need had FREEMAN to summon his
Yankee wit.

"All hands below!" he shouted. "Search every man
his chest;
With your Sabba'-day hats and jackets let staves and
oars be dressed!



Then range them along the gunwale—good scare-
crows breed good fear!
Make sure that all your lanterns are trimmed and
burning clear;
String them aloft in the rigging; then heave the
guns well out,
‘Quakers’ and all—step lively!” “Aye, aye!” came
the answering shout.

Thus did the peaceful *Bethell* put on a fighting guise,
Thus through the gathering darkness she loomed
for twice her size,
As under the flag of *England* to the *Spaniard* close
she drew,
Brave with her lights and cannon, proud of her
mighty crew.
So they hove to and parleyed, shouting across in
the night.
Clear sounded FREEMAN’S trumpet: “Yield while
ye may—or fight!”
What should the *Spaniard* answer, with a *British*
sloop of war

Full-armed, full-manned, as he thought her, monstrous of hull and spar,
Rolling there in the darkness, ready to fire and board?
Bitter the cry came back: "I yield — take ye my ship and sword!"

With the cheer that rang from the *Bethell* a laughing note was blent,
And the *Spanish* master, bewildered, wondering what it meant,
Wondered no more when, captive, on FREEMAN'S deck he stood,
And looked on the paltry cannon, six of them hewn from wood,
And the *Yankee* crew redoubled by a muster of empty clothes.
Then what a torrent of fury, what a flood of *Spanish* oaths!
For his guns were six and twenty, and his crew a hundred and ten,—
To the *Bethell's* puny complement of seven and thirty men;

And the *Jesus Maria and Joseph*, the ship he had
 brought so far,
 Bound from *Havana* to *Cadiz*, lost without scratch
 or scar,
 Was a register ship deep-laden with chests of silver
 and gold,
 Doubloons and dollars by thousands, for naught to
 a trickster sold!

But vain the wrath of the prisoners, manacled all
 by morn;
 For pleading they got but laughter, for cursing but
 looks of scorn,
 Till they made *Fayal*, where the *Spaniards*, fuming
 but now set free,
 Saw captor and captive westward fade over the
 rounding sea.

And the folk of *Boston* marveled when seamen
 swart and strong,
 Armed to the teeth like pirates, bore the treasure
 along

Through winding streets to the mansion where an
oaken cellar door
Swung shut with the owners' blessing on the sea
and its golden store.
And pieces of eight, of goodly weight, should have
lined the captain's kit
For the bloodless fight he won that night all by his
Yankee wit.



THE FLYING IRISHMAN

(1754)

WITH a rural clamor in urban air,
Chattering, twittering everywhere
Over the mouldered slabs that say,
“Here lie the elect of the royal day,”
The sparrows flutter on restless wing—
English sparrows to honor the King
Whose name the ancient Chapel saves:
Mark them when next you pass the graves,
Then another flight, of a stranger kind,
Over the tombstones, bring to mind.

No *English* bird, but an *Irish* wight,
Was the aeronaut who made this flight.
The Chapel was building and nearly done;
At least the roofing was well begun,—
And the workmen unawed by the holy place
Established a most unholy race.

For every day at the noontime bell
 They scrambled down to the ground pell-mell,
 And who came last must ever be first
 To pay for quenching his comrades' thirst.

Now PAT was the nimblest of all the lot,
 And vowed that never he'd pay the shot
 For so parched a crew:—they vowed he would,
 Or the reason why must be understood.
 So they plotted, and hatched a flawless plan
 To drink at the cost of the *Irishman*.

One summer's day as noon drew nigh
 They followed PAT with a watchful eye.
 To finish the task he was set to do
 There were minutes to spare — if the bell rang true!
 But bearing slates to the roof's far end,
 He needed TIME at least for a friend;
 Then TIME betrayed him, for, hark, too soon,
 The planned precipitate stroke of noon!
 He turned to look at the belfry steps —
 Packed, like a caucus! each *particeps*
Criminis jeering and joking PAT!



But quick! there's a trick worth two of that,
 And playing it now he may save in a trice
 His pride and his purse from sacrifice!

He draws a slate from out of his pack,
 Slips it sled-wise under his back —
 And coasts away like the *School-street* boys,
 With less of laughter, and more of poise —
 Every bit of it needed, too,
 When forth from the eaves he cleaves the blue;
 Say rather the green, for he sails clean through
 A tree's thick leafage, and lights at last,
 Still on his slate, all dangers past,
 Sitting upright on an ancient tomb
 Like a rising saint on the day of doom!

No *English* sparrow — an *Irish* wight
 Only could make so grand a flight,
 With time at the end of it, sound and tight
 To run to the foot of the belfry stairs,
 And taking the plotters unawares
 To greet them: "Bedad, have ye never heard
 Of the early worm and the *Irish* bird?"



THE GEM OF THE COLLECTION

WHEN Boston still was under the crown
The reverend clergy of the town
Were a solemn folk, as the men should be
Who ruled in the old theocracy;
And MATHER BYLES, of the MATHER line,
So long as he dealt with things divine
At Thursday Lecture or Sunday sermon
Was stately and grave as the Hill of *Hermon*;
But out of the pulpit, bless his heart,
The *Hollis Street* minister played the part
Of a wag so bold with his pranks and puns
That passing down from fathers to sons
The sayings and doings of MATHER BYLES
Still wreathe the soberest face with smiles.

One day his wife by the ironing board
Was at work — and at talk with her merry lord

When the knocker rapped, and out they peered:
 Just what the busy housewife feared!
 Three *Boston* ladies in brave array
 Coming to call on ironing day!
 "They never must find me thus," she cried,
 "But how can I flee, or where can I hide?"
 — "Why, there is the closet, step inside!"
 The space was narrow, but she was thin,
 And the smiling parson buttoned her in.

His wife thus safely hid from view,
 The DOCTOR did what all would do:
 Opened his door to the visitors three —
 How sorry dear Mistress BYLES would be
 To lose their visit — but begged to act
 As hostess and host, who are one in fact,
 And offered — the ladies most to please —
 To show them his curiosities,
 Gathered, he said, from over seas,
 From inland, and up and down the coast.
 Was ever a more enchanting host?
 He showed them this, and he showed them that,
 An earlier Puritan's antique hat,

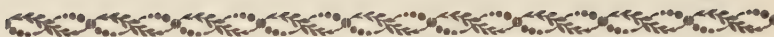
His mourning rings, and a walrus tooth,
Indian relics of art uncouth,
 A monster shell with the ocean's roar
 Prisoned for listeners safe on shore,
 The precious parchment sheet that bore
 His name with the *Aberdeen* degree,
 A letter from ISAAC WATTS, D. D.,
 A copy of POPE's great *Odyssey* —
 Or HOMER's — at least the book was sent
 By POPE himself with a compliment.
 For all these objects and many more
 The DOCTOR drew from his brimming store
 Full many a tale. So the morning sped,
 And the ladies, reticent, *Boston*-bred,
 Spake not, but wondered if thus from home
 Good Mistress BYLES was wont to roam.

At length the hour for parting came.
 "But stay," said the doctor, "half the fame
 Of my poor collection lost would be
 If ever a visitor failed to see
 My most remarkable oddity.'"



With that he stepped to the closet door
 He had shut an hour or two before,
 "One treasure," said he, "I hold so dear
 That guarded like gold I keep it here;
 Precious I count it beyond my life"—
 Wide flew the door; behold his wife!

Quick let the curtain now descend,
 Speed the tale to a decent end,
 And BYLES from the public gaze defend;
 For the joker who stirs his wife to wrath
 Must reap a piteous aftermath.



THE
TRUE BALLAD
OF THE
BLOCKADE OF BOSTON

(January 8, 1776)

WHEN would the siege and winter end? The
redcoats cursed the clime
That nourished foes so hard to kill, and took to
killing time;
And some the buskin donned, and played in *Faneuil*
Hall their parts—
Where infant LIBERTY had late been cradled in
men's hearts.

So when a farce was promised there, it fetched a
laughing crew
Of Tory folk, red-coated blades, matrons and maids
to view



The mock "Blockade of *Boston*;" 'twas hailed with
friendly cheer:

"They'll act it famously, forsooth, who've lived it
half a year."

And, faith, the play was packed with fun, and
laughter rippled free,
And Major-General WILLIAM HOWE shook with
the general glee.

"An actor in a soldier lost!" he cried when strutted
one

Across the stage who wore the guise of poor
GEORGE WASHINGTON,

Clad in a draggled uniform, quenched 'neath a wig
unkempt,

With dingy buckles, rusty sword — a target for
contempt.

"And him they call a 'General!' " laughed HOWE
and all the rest;

"Across the *Charles* so plucked a bird must keep a
ragged nest!"

Lo, at his heels a squire strode, fumbling a rusty gun,

A yokel from a *Yankee* farm! yet louder grew the
 fun,
 Until, the mirth still shaking all, a sergeant burst
 headlong
 Upon the scene with frightened mien, and shouted
 to the throng:
 "The *Yankees*, damn 'em, have attacked our works
 on BUNKER'S Hill!"
 Here, chuckled half the audience, is fooling better
 still!
 But, wiser than the laughing ones, HOWE cast his
 mirth aside;
 "Quick, officers, call out your men; all to your
 posts!" he cried.

Like summer merry-makers driven before a gust of
 rain,
 From stage and pit and gallery the soldiers sped
 amain
 Into the night; the ladies all, deserted, torn with
 fears,
 Huddled, and screamed, and, fainting, freed a flood
 of angry tears.

And well they might, for blood that night was shed
on *Charlestown* snow,

And flames across the water shone with baleful
rebel glow.

Another skirmish — that was all — 'twas *British* blood
that flowed;

The true Blockade of *Boston* still true and truer
showed —

A farce more tragic every day, and when the curtain
fell,

Why, HOWE set sail for *Halifax* with all who'd
played so well;

And the joy he left in *Boston* was joy enough for all

When WASHINGTON himself gave back to FREEDOM
Faneuil Hall.



VAE VICTIS!

A TALE OF THE REVOLUTION

Being an Incident in the BRITISH raid from *New-
port*, Rhode Island, upon *Bristol*, *Warren*,
and the Adjacent Country

(May 25, 1777.)

THE time was an early morn in May,
And 'seventy-seven the year,
When a pillaging band came up the Bay,
British and *Hessian* in brave array,—
Five hundred with never a fear.

They marched from the edge of *Bristol* town
A dozen of miles or more,
Robbing the "Enemies of the Crown,"
Burning their barns and their houses down,
And the boats dragged high on the shore.



Swaggering back through *Warren* they passed —
 Where the church was soon in a blaze —
 With store of booty o'er shoulders cast,
 So big with their household spoils at the last
 That they swore at the narrow ways.

And far in the rear of the jostling rout,
 Borne down by a monster drum,
 Was a panting *Hessian* all wearied out
 With the burden of plunder his body about,—
 A victor well-nigh o'ercome.

For his hands were filled (and the sun was hot),
 And his belt and his boot-tops wide
 Were stuffed so full that they offered not
 A hole or a hook for the merest jot
 Of the pilfered wares beside.

'Twas then that the women of *Warren* showed
 What spirit was theirs for the fight;
 They whispered beside the dusty road
 And measured the waddling drummer's load
 And mocked at his dismal plight.

“You spiller of Freedom’s blood for gold!”

They cried, as they circled him round,
 “Your days of marauding are past and told!
 Nay, answer us not in language bold!
 Prisoner, stand and be bound!”

Halted the *Hessian* and heavily sighed;
 “Ladies,” he said, “the field
 Is yours; for, in spite of a soldier’s pride,
 Foot-sore and faint I soon had died,
 And, rather than die, I yield.”

And the captive drummer for many a week
 Was held till a happy exchange
 Of prisoners eased him of service meek
 To the women’s fancy — whatever its freak
 Of menial biddings and strange.

And thus it has been since the world began,
 With its great and its lesser wars:—
 When it comes to a battle ’twixt woman and man,
 The daughters of VENUS, by luck or by plan,
 Can conquer the sons of MARS.



THE OX

Lines Commemorating the *Boston* Celebration
of the French Revolution

January 24, 1793

WHY did the *Castle* cannon roar
When the sun climbed cold from the sea?
What are the townsfolk gathering for,
What can the pageant be
That draws them forth from their homes and trades,
Sober citizens, lads and maids,
Radiant all with a holiday air,
Crowding the side-walks everywhere?

What can it be but the Civic Feast,
Where *Boston* drinks long life to *France*
Now too from a royal rule released,
And flushed with freedom's inheritance!
For the older sons of liberty
Must greet the younger now set free.

Look you, the great procession comes
 With blare of trumpets and whir of drums,
 Mounted citizens, marshal fine,
 Citizens more and more, in line,
 Marching by eights, then a dozen more,
 Armed like butchers, in snowy frocks,
 Guiltless now of a victim's gore,
 And then the victim itself—

THE OX,

Lifted high on a car of state,
 A giant beast of a thousand weight,
 Roasted whole; on each gilded horn
 The flag of a new republic borne,
 The *French* on the right, on the left our own;
 And carried afront of the monstrous thing,
 A legend in gold for all to see:

“Peace Offering

TO LIBERTY *and* EQUALITY.”

Must then FRATERNITY skulk alone?
 Not so, for following brotherly
 Come carts of bread for the crowd to munch,
 And two with a hogshead apiece of punch!



So through the winding streets they fare
 Passing the Stump of Liberty, where
 The Tree once stood; at OLIVER's Dock
 Pausing to christen it *Liberty Square*,
 With booming guns; then on they flock
 To Citizen HANCOCK's — by his door
 A halt, huzzas; then three cheers more
 For Citizen ADAMS — SAM of yore!

To *State Street* last they make their way,
 And there is a sight for a winter's day!
 Tables enough for a regiment spread
 From the *State House* down to *Kilby Street*,
 With ladies the hungry horde to greet
 From windows and balconies overhead!

Ah, now had the Ox still greater grown
 There were none too much of him; yet I own
 There might have been less of the punch, for soon
 The feasters are feasting like comrades boon,
 And, shame to tell, they throw so high
 Their votive offerings, rib and thigh,
 That the cautious ladies are fain to fly.

If life were only as long as art
 We should look at the whole, and no mere part,—
 Scraps of the feast to the almshouse sent,
 Prisoners loosed for FREEDOM's sake,
 Great balloons to the heavens lent,
 The children's treat of a "Civic Cake",
 Gentlefolk dining at *Faneuil Hall*,
 And the gilded horns, at evenfall,
 Lifted with lanterns high over all.

So speeds the glorious day to its close,
 And the weeks roll round ere *Boston* knows
 That when the festival deeds were done
 LOUIS the King, but three days gone,
 Had bowed his head to the guillotine,
 And FREEDOM was wearing the tyrant's mien.
 Then LIBERTY won by the *Gallic* plan
 Seemed not quite GOD's best gift to man,
 And its symbols, by grace of paradox,
 Remain the punch and the scattered ox.





A LEGEND OF
BRIMSTONE
CORNER

THE DEVIL and a gale of wind
Danced hand in hand up *Winter Street*,
The DEVIL like his demons grinned

To have for comrade so complete
A rascal and a mischief maker
Who'd drag an oath from any Quaker.

The WIND made sport of hats and hair
That ladies deemed their ornament;
With skirts that frolicked everywhere

Away their prim decorum went;
And worthy citizens lamented
The public spectacles presented.

The DEVIL beamed with horrid joy,
And when to *Tremont Street* they came,

He chuckled, "Wait you here, my boy,
 For duties now my presence claim
 In yonder church on *Brimstone Corner*,
 Where PLEASURE'S dead and lacks a mourner;

"But play about till I come back."
 With that he vanished through the doors,
 And since that day the almanac
 Has marked the years by tens and scores,
 Yet never from those sacred portals
 Returns the ENEMY of Mortals.

And that is why the faithful GALE
 Round *Park Street Corner* still must blow,
 Waiting for HIM with horns and tail—
 At least some people tell me so,—
 None of your famous antiquarians,
 But just some wicked *Unitarians*.





OLD HOMERICS

(For a *Boston* Old Home Week, 1906)

IN mythologic days of old
In ancient *Greece*, 'tis said,
Old HOMER, with his tongue of gold,
Would sometimes nod — his head.

Are we outdone? Nay, by the Cod!
Our *Athens* bears no lack!

OLD-HOMERS by the thousand nod,
And thousands more nod back!



THE ASCENT OF PARNASSUS

(Via The PUBLIC GARDEN)

UPON a sunny bench he sat
 One morning in a public park,—
 Ragged and old, with shoes and hat
 That must have dated from the Ark.

And could it be? Yes,—in his hand
 The tattered grey-beard held a book!
 “Lo, how enlightened is our land!”
 I proudly said, and bent my look

To note what mine of hidden truth
 He quarried in a vein so deep:—
 ’Twas just a Primer, and, forsooth,
 The poor old chap was fast asleep.





NOTES FOR THE CURIOUS

WHERE did you get that?" is perhaps the most familiar retort to the story-teller. If he will not tell, he has only himself to thank for a spreading suspicion that he is either an inventor pure and simple—to use the gentlest of adjectives—or a secretive churl. When his stories have an historic basis, there is not only the idle questioner to reckon with, but also the reader with the zeal of verification. To both of these persons the following notes are addressed.

A TRANSACTION IN STOCKS. This instance of harsh poetic justice is preserved in the *Records of the Governor and Company of the Massachusetts Bay* (vol. I, pp. 260, 291), in the minutes of meetings on 6 June, 1639 and 13 May, 1640. The second of these entries reads: "Edward Palmers fine of 5[£] was remited to him to 10^s, w^{ch} hee p^d." Thus was the transaction completed. The anecdote in a con-

densed version, describing Edward Palmer as "one E. P.", appears in Hubbard's *History of New England* (p. 248). It reappears more fully in one of Savage's footnotes to John Winthrop's *History of New England* (1st Ed. vol. II, p. 71). From this rendering of it a footnote in Drake's *History and Antiquities of Boston* (p. 246) is manifestly derived. Again it crops out in Winsor's *Memorial History of Boston*, (vol. I, p. 506).

BEN FRANKLIN'S HEAD. Franklin himself is authority for this anecdote. He told it in a letter from Passy, 12 May, 1784, to Cotton Mather's son Samuel. The letter is printed in John Bigelow's *Life of Benjamin Franklin, Written by Himself* (Phila. 1884, vol. III, p. 261). In Barrett Wendell's *Cotton Mather* (p. 297) the story is retold. Franklin's own version contains a phrase deserving the emphasis of italics: "This advice, *thus beat into my head*, has frequently been of use to me."

THE BRISTOL BELL. The substance of this story is found in Professor Wilfred H. Munro's *History of Bristol, R. I.: The Story of the Mount Hope Lands*, p. 146.

THE BALLAD OF THE BETHELL. The *Life of Josiah Quincy*, by his son Edmund Quincy, (p. 4) provides this story. It is worth noting that the spelling of *Bethell* is due to the fact that the vessel was named for Slingsby Bethell, afterwards Lord Mayor of London, the English agent of the Boston owners, Col. Josiah Quincy and his brother-in-law Edward Jackson, the husband of the Dorothy Quincy of Dr. Holmes's poem. A contemporary painting of the *Bethell* is preserved by the Massachusetts Historical Society.

THE GEM OF THE COLLECTION. In the second volume (p. 370) of Lucius Manlius Sargent's *Dealings with the Dead* this specimen of the Rev. Mather Byles's practical joking will be found, together with many other anecdotes of the irrepressible parson, who occupied the Hollis Street pulpit from 1733 to 1776. To supplement this account of a Boston character famous in his time, and long after it, the curious are referred to Louise Imogen Guiney's article, "A Tory Parson," in *The Atlantic Monthly* for April, 1887, and to James R. Gilmore's paper, "Nathaniel Emmons and Mather Byles" in the *New England*

Magazine of August, 1897. Further references and a piece of contemporary verse on "punning Byles" will reward looking at a footnote in Winsor's *Memorial History of Boston*, (vol. II, p. 229).

THE FLYING IRISHMAN. The basis for this story will be found in the *Recollections of Samuel Breck* (p. 41). It came to him by oral tradition through a relative.

THE TRUE BALLAD OF THE BLOCKADE OF BOSTON. The incident on which these verses are based is related in many accounts of the Revolutionary period in Boston. Two "original" versions of it will be found in Moore's *Diary of the Revolution*, (vol. I, p. 199).

VAE VICTIS! A footnote in Professor Wilfrid H. Munro's *History of Bristol* (p. 209), quoting a note in G. M. Fessenden's *History of Warren, R. I.*, (p. 94) provides the basis for these rhymes.

THE OX. The writer's attempt to describe an unfamiliar historic scene rather than to tell a story may have robbed the reader of all curiosity regard-

ing "sources". Yet there is a brief allusion to the matter in W. W. Wheildon's *Curiosities of History* (p. 140), and a much fuller and more satisfactory version of it in Winsor's *Memorial History of Boston* (vol. IV, p. 10). This will lead on to the *Columbian Centinel*, a Boston semi-weekly newspaper. The issues of Thursday, January 23 and Saturday, January 26, 1793, preserve many picturesque details of the celebration for which the vehicle of verse proved inadequate.

A LEGEND OF BRIMSTONE CORNER. The breezes of "Brimstone Corner" are responsible also for the wit's lament — more familiar than the traditional anecdote here put into rhyme — that a shorn lamb was not constantly tethered at the junction of Park and Tremont Streets. The verses are reprinted here from *Boston Common: Scenes from Four Centuries*.

OLD HOMERICS and *THE ASCENT OF PARNASSUS* have nothing behind them but contemporary observation.

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